SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE US
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Guest Editorial

The Child is Father to the Man

By HAROLD S. KOPLEWICZ, M.D.

Mental illness has a negative impact on many aspects of our lives, no matter our age. It can manifest itself through troubled behavior, such as withdrawal, aggression, temper outbursts, poor school performance; through troubled feelings, for example fearfulness, worries, depression, and through troubled thinking, such as poor judgment, irrational beliefs. However, it is often difficult for parents and school professionals to judge the needs of a child for mental health intervention. This genuine dilemma stems from several sources. For one, most of children’s problems are not strikingly abnormal; rather, they are exaggerations of what we rightfully consider normal. We all get inattentive, restless, cranky, nervous, orblue at times. At what point do these common behaviors and feelings cause concern for our children? Another cause for dismissing or minimizing problems is the expectation that children go through phases, and that current problems are temporary and will pass.

How can we tell when our children need mental health intervention? Several rules of thumb help in determining the need for seeking professional attention for a child. How much do the problems impact on the child’s quality of life? Do they restrict activities that other children her age typically engage in, such as enjoyment of playdates, sleepovers, family activities, social interactions with children his age, looking forward to fun activities? Children spend much of their time in school, so we want to know whether the child is flourishing in this important social environment. Do the child’s academic accomplishments match her intellectual ability? Finally, does the child experience unhappiness or misery on a consistent basis?

Importance of Childhood Mental Health for Adult Adjustment.

Children’s mental health problems affect the child, the family, as well as children’s schoolmates. For anyone who has lived with a child who experiences difficulty, it is easy to appreciate the importance of helping children, and to wish for the search for the best treatments possible. Our children’s happiness and success are clearly a priority. Besides the desire for immediate relief, there are other reasons for us to be concerned. Over the past 10 years, we have accumulated information about the importance of child mental illness on adjustment in adulthood. We now have evidence documenting that trouble in childhood is not regularly a passing phase or a stage. Indeed, for many, the child is father to father. I have done extensive studies on neurotransmission. Kandel is a fascinating scientist. Risks taken during all times of history, the man.

We now understand that severe anxiety in childhood is a harbinger of depression and anxiety in later life, that learning disorders don’t just go away, that ADHD places children at risk for antisocial or criminal behavior and substance abuse, that depressed adolescents will much more likely struggle with depression in adulthood than their non-depressed peers. In fact, all adult chronic mental disorders start in childhood. This is not to say that all affected children become affected adults, but they are much more likely to be so than other children.

Importance of Treatment and Prevention.

The negative consequences of child mental disorders has made the need for effective treatments all the more important. We have also learned a lot about treatment over the past 10 years. We now have treatments that work in many instances and that hold the hope of reversing ill-fated trajectories from childhood, adolescence into adulthood. Prevention efforts are just beginning, but hold promise.

Yet, most children, in fact the overwhelming majority, do not receive treatment. Many factors account for this sad state of affairs. There is a dearth of mental health professionals well-trained in diagnosis and knowledgeable about a variety of treatments. Cost is also a factor. But, in addition, stigma about mental illness is alive and well. Seeking help is still viewed as shameful, as defining parents as failures, and is pejorative toward the child. We face multiple challenges in reversing these barriers to caring for our children. The focus of this issue of Education Update on children’s mental problems sends the right message. It is a step toward keeping us informed and for us to be diligent in our support to parents and teachers. It also reminds us that we need to enlist the interest of our political representatives so that the needs of children are met.

Dr. Harold S. Koplewicz is the Founder and Director of the NYU Child Study Center.

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Cover Caption

President George W. Bush greets Greece Athena High School senior, Jason McElwee and McElwee’s mother, Debbie, upon arriving in Rochester, New York recently, Cover Story on Page 11.

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Dr. Pola Rosen

is a winner of the award.

GUEST EDITORIAL

The Child is Father to the Man

By HAROLD S. KOPLEWICZ, M.D.

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CAREERS

Lou Young: Veteran CBS
Newscaster and First-Time Author

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

April 17, 2006: “Crime scene technicians verify the path of the fatal bullet tonight but there’s really no mystery,” booms out the sonorous voice of Lou Young on the CBS evening news. “A shot fired in anger on West Tremont Avenue missed its target and instead hit a passing minivan full of children being ferried to Easter services, causing fatal injury to a toddler [David Pacheco] strapped in a carseat.” As Young interviews the emergency medical technician, Angel Cruz, who unsuccessfully tried to revive the dying boy, he leans over and pats Cruz on the shoulder. “I’m sorry,” Young says simply.

And so Young continues to weave an on-camera magic that combines solid journalism with a humane yet consummately professional interviewing style, qualities that have served him well in a three decade long broadcast journalism career that began in Gainesville, Florida in 1974. “I was blessed with an accidental career path that allowed me to take lots of tiny steps,” Young says of his early days in the industry following graduation with a B.S. in Broadcasting from the University of Florida. As one of only three employees for WCJB-TV, “I would go weeks without being live because I had to shoot the film…Then I also wrote and edited…By starting out that way, you can make mistakes without having your career implode on you,” reminisces Young.

Far from imploding, Young’s broadcast career skyrocketed, and he packed his bags for the bright lights of New York City at the tender age of 28 to work for ABC (1981-1990), then NBC (1990-1994), and finally his current boss, CBS, in 1994. From his first story about a multiple fatality car wreck in 1974, Young has since gone on to report on the most monumental headline grabbers of our times. “When I covered TWA Flight 800 [in 1996], I thought it was the biggest story I’d do,” recalls Young. “Then I covered President Clinton’s impeachment proceedings. Then there was the election of 2000, then 9/11 and the Iraq War…The news just seems to get bigger and bigger.

We live in strange and exciting times,” he concludes. But Young’s most memorable story was his exclusive interview with now-convicted serial killer Nathaniel White in Orange County, New York, complete with all the sensational trappings—an on-camera confession and gory details of how and why White murdered each of his victims. “I had a killer exclusive that gave my station [Channel 4 at the time] number one ratings for the first time in years,” he recollects with a kind of “aw shucks” humility.

Despite a grueling schedule that keeps Young traveling to wherever the next story is breaking (he spent months in Israel reporting on the Arab-Israeli conflict), he has found time to co-author a brand new book with renowned sketch artist Marilyn Church entitled The Art of Justice, which offers an inside look at some of the most sensational trials of the last thirty years. The book combines Church’s artistry (for years, television cameras were banned from courtrooms and artists like Church were commissioned to record the day’s proceedings at lightning pace) and Young’s painstaking research and riveting prose (he spent months in Israel reporting on the Arab-Israeli conflict). When i covered TWA Flight 800…then 9/11 and the Iraq War…the news just seems to get bigger and bigger.
BEYOND THE STETHESCOPE

A column dedicated to physicians who have special talents outside the parameters of medicine!

REVERIE IN A HARDWARE SHOP

By D. A. FEINFELD, MD

If only I were an axe murderer, boy, would my poetry sell!

Think of me honing this blade till I see my face flashed on its steel screen...

Planning’s the hard part. It can’t be mindless, like God’s wind...

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THE DEAN’S COLUMN

WHEN NUMBERS ARE FRIENDLY

(to each other)

By ALFRED POSAMENTIER, Ph.D.

What could possibly make two numbers friendly? Your students’ first reaction might be numbers that are friendly to them. Remind them that we are talking here about numbers that are “friendly” to each other. Well, mathematicians have decided that two numbers are considered friendly (or as often used in the more sophisticated literature, amicable) if the sum of the proper divisors of one equals the second and the sum of the proper divisors of the second number equals the first number.

Sounds complicated? Have your students look at the smallest pair of friendly numbers: 220 and 284.

The sum of the factors of 17,296 is 1 + 2 + 4 + 8 + 16 + 23 + 46 + 47 + 92 + 94 + 184 + 188 + 368 + 376 + 752 + 1081 + 2162 + 4324 + 8648 = 18,416.

The sum of the factors of 18,416 is 1 + 2 + 4 + 8 + 16 + 1151 + 2302 + 4604 + 9208 = 220.

Here are a few more friendly pairs of numbers:

- 2,620 and 2,924
- 5,020 and 5,364
- 6,232 and 6,368
- 10,744 and 10,856
- 9,363,584 and 9,437,056
- 10,744 and 10,856

For the expert the following is one method for finding friendly numbers:

Let a = \( p^n \cdot x \)

where \( n \) is an integer \( \geq 2 \), and \( a, b, c \) are all prime numbers, then \( 2^a b \) and \( 2^c e \) are friendly numbers. (Notice that for \( n = 2, 4, \) and \( 7 \) we have \( a, b, c \) and all prime for \( n = 200 \).)

Dr. Alfred S. Posamentier is Dean of the School of Education at City College of NY, author of over 35 books on math, and member of the NYS Standards Committee on Math.

Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
(Deveen, Massachusetts) seeks a Director for the Theodore R. Sizer Teachers Center, the school’s professional development outreach center. The Sizer Teachers Center aims to promote the work of Parker and the Coalition of Essential Schools locally, regionally, and nationally. A description of the Director’s position is available at www.parker.org.

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Concordia Language Villages announces a two-week Arabic Language and cultural immersion program for youth in Vergas, MN!

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<th>Dates</th>
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<td>July 10-22, 2006</td>
<td>8-14</td>
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Last year, nearly 200 kids from New York learned more about the languages and cultures of the world at our Villages in Minnesota and Georgia. We offer Chinese, Danish, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish and Swedish, tool.

Generous scholarships and excellent charter transportation are available. We are also hiring camp counselors and program leaders. Contact us for registration forms, employment applications and more information.

Ask for a FREE Program Guide and DVD!
Applications are now being accepted for Fall admission.

By LIZAYOUNG

Professor Howard Gardner is at it again, never ceasing to create innovative approaches to traditional conceptions of thinking and learning. His groundbreaking theory of multiple intelligences spawned a re-evaluation of school curricula, highlighting the importance of including the arts and culture in mainstream learning.

Recently, at the annual conference of the National Association of Laboratory Schools (NALS), co-hosted by the Bank Street College School for Children and The School at Columbia University, Gardner’s keynote included the framework for his upcoming book, Five Minds for the Future. “It’s in part an essay in psychology and education, but it’s also a programmatic book in the sense that I think these are the five minds we need to develop in the future,” Gardner explained. The book takes into account the intellectual thrust of the individual as well as the role of a person within the framework of society and humanity.

The five minds—disciplined, synthesizing, creating, respectful, and ethical—differ from multiple intelligence in working in a more synergistic fashion as opposed to separate categories of intelligences. The “disciplined mind,” Gardner argues, is not simply knowing a particular subject but “learning the way people who are experts in the field think,” and should develop by the end of secondary school.

The second type of mind, the “synthesizing mind,” is defined by “deciding what to focus on, what’s important, what to ignore, and putting that together in a way that makes sense.” With a dearth of information about synthesizing in text-books, Gardner has become most intrigued by this concept. Gardner considers himself primarily a synthesizer, but now as a “fish that has suddenly discovered he’s in water,” Gardner is faced with the challenge of uncovering what goes on as people synthesize, what is good versus bad synthesis, and how to enhance the process.

Discussing the creative mind, Gardner points out that today “creating is a premium and not an option.” While one needs a certain amount of discipline and synthesizing to create, too much of either will stifle creativity. To foster creativity in the classroom, Gardner recommends that teachers “model novel approaches and answers to questions and indicate [to students] that those responses are legitimate.” Students should be encouraged to come up with innovative approaches, discussing ideas that did not work and alternative models. There should also be study of “examples of creative ideas, actions, behaviors,” figuring out how success was attained, and what obstacles had to be overcome.

While the first three minds are more cognitively oriented, the last two, respect and ethics, have more to do with personality and emotion. The respectful mind, Gardner indicated, has to do with “how we think and relate to other people, most importantly to other people around us.” While this mind develops at a relatively young age, a kind of intuitive altruistic sense of reaching out to those around us, “attempting to understand differences and work with them,” the ethical mind is more abstract, and generally develops during adolescence. It has to do with fulfilling one’s responsibility in the world in terms of job role and as citizen, thinking in terms such as:

“I’m a teacher...journalist...physicist, carrying out that role in the most professional way I can.”

Contemplating these two minds for the past two decades, Gardner points out that the difference between them is clear for him, but he’s still working on conveying the difference to others. He finds the conflict faced by Abraham Lincoln during the civil war period as a good illustration of the difference. While Lincoln’s respectful mind longed to free slaves, it was his ethical mind that chose not to abolish slavery in favor of preserving the union.

In Lincoln’s case is an indicator of the conflict that may arise between respect and ethics. Gardner described the dilemmas teachers often face, struggling between respect and ethics. In the latter part of his book, Gardner explores the interaction between five minds. He doesn’t see them as isolated categories, but as a general taxonomy followed by respect before ethics, discipline before synthesis, ultimately creating. Within the classroom, a teacher is faced with the challenge of deciding whether to have students work synergistically, or focus and build on strengths.

In today’s educational system, teachers often must deal, as was the case with Lincoln, with personal challenges of respect versus ethics. The battle, for example, of teaching to the test versus presenting a broader, richer curriculum, leaves a teacher with the choices of: “maintenance”—the job is simply a necessity in order to pay one’s rent; “guerilla warfare,” saying yes, and then asking for forgiveness after acting in the opposite manner; or “domain expansion,” changing the current institution, or finding a new one.

Five Minds for the Future holds promise for a positive, resounding impact, intellectually and socially, for students, educators, and lifelong learners.
LAB SCHOOLS LEAD THE WAY IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

By SYBIL MAIMIN

Laboratory, or lab, schools generally associated with colleges or universities are prime sources of research, experimentation, curriculum development, clinical training, and staff development at the cutting edge of education. This year’s annual conference of the National Association of Laboratory Schools, hosted in New York City by the Bank Street College School for Children and The School at Columbia University, presented four days rich in provocative workshops, presentations, school visits, keynote speakers, and sharing of ideas and practices. Similar to recommended classroom approaches, much of the activity was hands-on and interactive. Sessions were wide-ranging and included such topics as “Transforming Math Education with Music and Technology,” “Addressing Issues of Sexual Orientation in a 4th Grade Classroom,” “Doing the Right Thing with High Stakes Testing,” “Social Emotional Learning in School,” and “Stop-Motion Animation and Digital Video Editing.” A keynote speaker, Howard Gardner, professor of cognition and education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a highly respected and influential developer of the concept of multiple intelligence, has inspired two lab schools to operate under his name. One, in Scranton, Pennsylvania (coincidentally, Gardner’s home town), The Howard Gardner School for Discovery, (K-8), presented a lively workshop at the conference that focused on curriculum development based on his theories.

The Gardner school has developed an apprenticeship model that utilizes adult mentors from the “real world” and a system of peer tutoring. Experiences and assessments reflect real world expectations. Workshop participants were introduced to the concept of The Howard Gardner Store where 3rd and 4th graders, working three to a shift, sell items ranging from school supplies to gifts to nutritious snacks to the entire school community. Interest is maintained with special promotions such as cookie-grams for Valentine’s Day and “Birthday Blasts.” A local advertising agency created a marketing campaign, clubs and marketing of the store to the community. Referencing the multiple intelligence concept of multiple intelligence, has inspired many laboratory schools to operate under his name. One, in Scranton, Pennsylvania (coincidentally, Gardner’s home town), The Howard Gardner School for Discovery, (K-8), presented a lively workshop at the conference that focused on curriculum development based on his theories.

The Gardner School at Columbia University has collaborated with the school’s literary magazine and a regional public/private/higher education consortium, The Scranton Area Partnership, to market itself to community partners as providers of teachers and students at the cutting edge of educational practice. Speaking to the importance of the collaborations, Rizzo explains, “Real reform begins with preparing teacher candidates, staff development is pursued with a regional vision. A respected regional program can market itself to community partners as producer of teachers and students at the cutting edge of educational practice.”

Director Rizzo reports that so far 24 institutions in the Scranton area have joined together in a regional public/private/higher education collaborative that benefits all participants. Schools and universities decide together about filling slots for student teachers and field experiences. Staff development is pursued with a regional vision. A respected regional program can market itself to community partners as producer of teachers and students at the cutting edge of educational practice. Speaking to the importance and potential of the collaborations, Rizzo explains, “Real reform begins with preparing teacher candidates. If we don’t change teacher prep programs, it will be taken from us and others will tell us what to do, like No Child Left Behind.”

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Former President Bill Clinton Combats Diabetes & Obesity at PS 197

By SYBILL MAIMIN

It was a day filled with excitement at PS 197, the John B. Russwurm Elementary School in Harlem, as former President Bill Clinton stood on a makeshift stage in the gym to launch an attack on childhood obesity, a major initiative of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a partnership between the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association with critical support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Looking fit and trim after facing his own health problems, Clinton explained to an attentive group of students and teachers that “childhood obesity is a national emergency” and “if the present trend continues, this generation could have a shorter life span than their parents.” In fact, the number of overweight youngsters tripled between 1980 and 2000, putting children at risk for “adult” illnesses such as type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Exacerbating the problem, young people are opting out of exercise to watch TV, play video games, or surf the Internet, and many schools are reducing their physical education programs.

The Healthy Schools initiative, which focuses on healthier lifestyles, hopes to halt the obesity trend by 2010 and end it by 2015. Schools are the chosen venue because, explained Dr. Robert H. Eckel, president of the American Heart Association, “they get mixed messages all around. Schools must set an example.” Studies show, he advised, that good health benefits both the body and the brain, and healthy children do better in their classes.

The proud host of the launch, PS 197 has been chosen as one of 285 schools from 13 states for the first, pilot phase of the program. Additional schools will be added in coming years. “At-risk” schools, those whose socioeconomic and demographic base indicate greatest vulnerability for obesity, will be targeted. Goals include improving the nutritional value of foods served in and out of school, increasing physical activity, classroom lessons on healthy lifestyles, and encouragement of staff wellness. The program will work with food and beverage companies, sporting goods manufacturers, the fitness industry, and health care providers. A “for kids, by kids” movement will empower young students to become agents of change. In an example of community support, Sylvia’s, the well-known soul food restaurant in Harlem, with assistance from dietitians and endocrinologists from North General Hospital, is offering cooking lessons for children that will show how to bake rather than fry chicken, cook collard greens without fat, and add black-eyed peas to salads. Speaking to the children, Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, exclaimed, “It is your health and your future which is important to us and the world. We aren’t going to settle for anything less than a healthier generation.”

Former President Clinton made the Healthy Schools launch a memorable day for all. He was generous with his time and happily sat for photos with groups of children neatly decked out in navy and white attire and with teachers grinning from ear to ear. He seemed to relish the contact and also seemed sincere in his desire to inspire change and bring about a healthier generation. Applications for new schools wishing to participate in the program will be available July 1 at healthiergeneration.org or 1-800-AHA-USA1.
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COLLEGE CORNER

Compiled BY TIMOTHY BRUNNER

New York University
New York University will once again have its commencement ceremony in Washington Square Park. The New York City Parks Department informed the city that the timetable for the completion of renovations to the park would be completed in time for the May graduation ceremony. Washington Square Park has been home to the NYU graduation ceremony since 1976.

Columbia University
Columbia received a $200 million gift to establish a new Neuroscience facility. The center is made possible by a gift from Dawn M. Greene and the Jerome L. Greene Foundation. The donation is the largest private gift received by any United States university for the creation of a single facility.

University of Pennsylvania
The University of Pennsylvania announced that it will replace loans with grants for students whose families are struggling financially. President Amy Gutmann announced that students who qualify for the new benefit come from families earning $50,000 or less. “By eliminating loans for low-and-middle income students, our financial aid program now enables students from every family income-level to enroll at Penn,” said Gutmann.

Voices from Campuses Around the City

CAMPUS CRAWLER
By TIMOTHY BRUNNER

Question: What books would you remove or add to the reading lists in class today?
Taylor Long
Senior
Hofstra University
Journalism major

“I would take away Heart of Darkness because I feel that those who read the book take away its general understanding. I do not think it necessarily needs to be taught in the classroom.”

“I would however add Salman Rushdie’s Satanic Verses because it is a book that is more interesting and complex and there is a lot which can be taught from it.”

Lisa Flores
Junior
Hofstra University
English Major

“The book I would probably eliminate from my English curriculum would have to be J.D. Salinger’s Catcher in the Rye. I feel schools should teach less known works by really popular authors.”

“An example of a book which is less known by Salinger which I would add would be Franny and Zooey.”

“Before I read about my summer vacation, I’d like to ask that all pagers, beepers, and cell phones be turned off.”

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Recommended Readings by Education Update’s Advisory Board

(For additional member’s suggestions see April 2006 on www.educationupdate.com)

Augusta Souza Kappner, President, Bank Street College of Education
Plato’s Republic
Night by Elie Weisel
Wouldn’t Take Nothing for My Journey Now by Maya Angelou

Harold Koplewicz, MD, Founder & Director of NYU Child Study Center
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (James Joyce); one of the first novels to use stream of consciousness writing, changing the way we look at narrative.

Mythology (Hamilton or Bulfinch)
Communist Manifesto ( Marx); has there been a more powerful or influential text in the past 150 years?
The Bible; like it or not, the old testament stories explain the foundation of western moral; add to that the Bhagavad Gita, the Koran, and Siddhartha( Hesse) and you’ve got a pretty good spring-board for understanding the modern global society.

Honoring Outstanding Teachers & Administrators of the Year

On Thursday, June 22, 2006 at 9 am at the Harvard Club, Education Update will be honoring teachers and administrators for their outstanding contribution to children in the public schools of New York City. Keynote speaker will be Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor, City University of New York, introduced by President Augusta Souza Kappner, Bank Street College of Education. Roberta Guaspari (played by Meryl Streep in ‘Music of the Heart’) and her violinists will perform.

For more information email EdNews@aol.com.

Lou Young
continued from page 3

few. Through his research, Young reinforced his belief that “there’s not one version of the truth.” The longer you look at something, the more sides there are...It’s like a prism,” he muses. Yet, according to Young, “sometimes the justice of the case has nothing to do with the verdict.”

Lou Young attributes his career success to key mentors he encountered in his years of schooling— not only the journalism professors who taught him how to capture the salient facts and reveal the essence of a story, but also his Newfield High School English teacher in Selden, Long Island, Warren Glass, who taught him to appreciate classic authors and good writing. “Whenever I get back in a story, I’m saying, I don’t try to write more; I read,” Young explains. His advice to up-and-coming broadcasters: “If you can write, there will always be a place for you in the industry.”

Revealing a modesty uncharacteristic of a multiple Emmy Award-winner who has earned a shelf of distinguished accolades from such gold standard organizations as the Associated Press and United Press International, Young has no higher aspirations than to continue in his supremely rewarding profession. “I go to work every day liking what I do...Most days I go into the office thinking, ‘This is a cool job.’”

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By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

In response to a question about why she founded and became director of The Lab School of Washington D.C. 40 years ago, Professor Sally L. Smith, a nation-ally recognized leader in the field of learning disabilities (LD), does not hesitate to add, she has his own entrepreneurial business, and though he may need an assist with financial matters, he’s doing well. As she has written many times—five books, hundreds of articles, including a section on LD for the 1985 Medical and Health Annual of the Encyclopedia Britannia—in the late sixties, she felt there were no adequate services for intelligent children with learning disabilities— the term wasn’t even around then. “There was a frantic search, and Sally Smith, who had majored in dance and then went on to study psychology and cultural anthropol-o-gy, coming along the way an extraordinary number of awards and becoming a professor in the graduate School of Education at American University, in charge of the Master’s Program in Special Education.” The Lab School methodology has already been replicated in Baltimore and is being adopted by a school in Philadelphia.

Known for, among other innovative programs and techniques, the Academic Club Method, Prof. Smith, a soft-spoken woman who takes pride in attracting celebrities to talk about their experiences—on television, in interviews, in business, and though he may need an assist with personal matters, he doesn’t hesitate to add, he has his own entrepreneurial business, and though he may need an assist with financial matters, he’s doing well. As she has written many times—five books, hundreds of articles, including a section on LD for the 1985 Medical and Health Annual of the Encyclopedia Britannia—in the late sixties, she felt there were no adequate services for intelligent children with learning disabilities—the term wasn’t even around then. “There was a frantic search, and Sally Smith, who had majored in dance and then went on to study psychology and cultural anthropol-o-gy, coming along the way an extraordinary number of awards and becoming a professor in the graduate School of Education at American University, in charge of the Master’s Program in Special Education.” The Lab School methodology has already been replicated in Baltimore and is being adopted by a school in Philadelphia.

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BY MIKE COHEN

In February Jason McElwain scored 20 points in his high school basketball game in Rochester, New York. He measures only 5-foot-6. Jason registered his point total in four minutes of play. And, to the excitement of advocates of children with disabilities, he did all of this as a mainstream special education student. Jason has a form of autism.

“McElwain’s success story demonstrates that children with disabilities can indeed achieve goals in a mainstream environment,” said Sudha Ramaswamy, Ph.D., a behavior analyst. “Furthermore, it reiterates society’s obligation to not only improve the capacity of individuals with special needs, but also increase their opportunities.”

Jason’s six long-range three-pointers in the game brought the Greece Athena High School home crowd to such a frenzy that fans stormed the court and carried him away as the final buzzer sounded. But even they couldn’t imagine the celebration they had begun. International media attention followed; so did a meeting with President Bush, who warmly hugged Jason at Rochester airport and asked if he could call him “J-Mac.”

“I ended my career on the right note,” Jason told the Associated Press after his team’s 79-43 victory. “I was really hotter than a pistol.”

This would be Jason’s first and last high school basketball game. McElwain, a senior, served as the team’s manager during his high school years. Coach Jim Johnson gave him the chance to play as a thank-you for a job well done.

Mainstreaming, or inclusive education, integrates children with disabilities into an entire school community. Since Jason is considered to be high-functioning within the autistic spectrum, he has been able to greatly benefit from going to a typical school. “He’s a fun, high self-esteem kid,” said Mike Butler, the adaptive physical education teacher and girl’s basketball coach at the school. “Being on the team helped him feel part of the community.”

Despite his recent success and popularity, life has not been easy for Jason. “He could not always find his way,” said Butler. He did not begin speaking until he was 5 years old, and he still displays social shortcomings, such as misreading social cues and asking the same question repeatedly, according to Fumiko Pickering, 12th-grade Assistant Principal at Greece Athena as well as the school’s Special Education Supervisor. Displaying appropriate social interaction is a major deficiency for people with autism. Pickering adds that Jason receives “speech and language services for social skills and pragmatic language”; he no longer gets occupational therapy, but still takes English, social studies, and math classes in a special education setting.

JOSHN JMC EWAIN SCORES BIG FOR MAINSTREAMING

Blind Mountain Climber

Erik Weihenmayer

Conquers Everest

BY JOAN E. SHERMAN

Erik Weihenmayer has never let blindness stand in the way of achieving his goals. Although he lost his sight at the age of 13, Erik has climbed several of the highest peaks in the world, including Mt. Everest. He’s also an accomplished wrestler, skier and sky-diver. In his most recent project, Erik, now 37, is helping to make Braille textbooks more widely and rapidly available to vision-impaired youngsters.

Erik’s advocacy of the Braille Textbook Transcriber project arises directly from his own experience. At Westen (CT) High School and Boston College, Erik struggled with the need to move beyond his loss of sight, to be more than “the blind boy.” His success reflected many factors, including a support system that helped him build self-confidence. But as Erik notes, “Confidence without skill is empty.” For the blind, the essential skills include reading Braille and navigating with a cane.

Although initially learning to read Braille symbolized to Erik an embracing difference from his classmates, he soon found that it was a way for him to be reintroduced to the world. Now, for example, he could read aloud to his class a poem that he’d written himself. If he could do this, he thought, what else could he do?

Sports provided another way for him to connect with his surroundings. Climbing, he found, had a special appeal. “I loved rock climbing because I thought it was a wonderful way to problem-solve my way up the rock face,” Erik says. “Finding the patterns in the rock with my hands and my feet, and my brain, using my leverage and my balance, and my strength to work my way from point A to point B to point C was really super exciting and encouraging.” Through climbing, Erik deepened his understanding of friendship, teamwork and trust, learning how literally to put his life in the hands of friends.

Erik’s many other accomplishments include six years of teaching math and English to fifth-graders in Phoenix, AZ—“a challenge even for the sighted.” Although Erik had exceptional support from parents, teachers and friends, his struggle to deal with his loss of sight was compounded by delays in obtaining Braille textbooks. Although other children could do this, he thought, what else could he do?

“Erik’s success reflects why we showed it,” said Waters, “is that people who need it.”

For the blind, the essential skills include reading Braille and navigating with a cane. The transcribing of textbooks into Braille is now done almost exclusively by volunteers who are extremely dedicated but simply cannot keep up with the demand. Erik has worked with the American Foundation for the Blind, with the support of the Verizon Foundation, to develop a new college curriculum, the Braille Textbook Transcriber program, which aims to develop a cadre of trained individuals who can greatly speed the process. The Internet-based courses are being presented by Northwest Vista College of San Antonio, Texas. Participants who successfully complete the 36 credit hours will earn a national Braille Textbook Transcriber certificate.

Erik draws special inspiration from Helen Keller, whom he sees as a true pioneer—someone who, as he puts it, “push an idea through all the uncertainty and chaos of life.” By this definition Erik is also a pioneer, using his extraordinary capabilities to help others meet their special challenges and achieve their full potential.
Heiskell Braille & Talking Book Library Honors Selis Family

By TIMOTHY BRUNNER

The New York Public Library’s Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library held a ceremony recently to celebrate the naming of the second floor of its New York branch in honor of Irving and Sara Selis. Library officials, Selis family members and library regulars gathered to express gratitude to the Irving and Sara Selis Foundation for its considerable gift to the library.

Both visually impaired, Irving and Sara Selis dedicated their lives to helping those who were in the same position as themselves. Operating a newsstand in Greenwich Village for over 14 years, the Selis’ contributed to the creation of the New York Association of Blind Newsdealers in 1928. Then, in 1938 Irving and Sara founded The Associated Blind, an organization dedicated to the welfare of the blind.

Carol Heller, niece to the Selis’ recalled her aunt and uncle’s pioneering mission. They wanted “to bring light to those who sat in darkness and help the visually impaired become self-sufficient,” said Heller.

The library boasts a significant collection of Braille texts, as well as audio books for those with visual disabilities. The facility contains a vast selection of fiction and nonfiction, spanning from the classics to the bestsellers. The library also features audio equipment for recorded texts, magazines, and special format materials.

Susan Kent, Director and Chief Executive for the Branch Libraries acknowledged the library’s diverse collection. “We even have weight-training for Dummies,” Kent said. With the Selis Foundation contribution, the library will be able to acquire more resources, allowing the library to continue to flourish, she said.

New York Public Library President, Paul LeClerc was also present for the naming of the second floor of the library. LeClerc recognized the significant need for a facility, such as the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library. “We are reaching an enormously broad audience with other forms of need,” LeClerc said.

The ceremony ended with a poetry reading of Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself,” by a professional actor who is part of a volunteer program that records books for the blind.

Although the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library is supported by funding from New York State, as well as New York City, the biggest impact is felt through private donations. A plaque, emblazoned with Irving and Sara Selis’s name in script and Braille, can be read by those who visit the second floor of the library.

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Organ Transplant Recipient Leads Team to Victory

By RICHARD KAGAN

Brittney Kroon is quite a young woman. Kroon, a 6’4” senior starts at the center position for the Seattle Pacific University women’s basketball team. She has excelled at that position for nearly four years, and is currently ranked fourth all-time for career blocked shots in Division II Competition.

Kroon, 21, holds the Great Northwest Athletic Conference (GNAC) record for blocked shots in a career, which changes with every game she plays. And she averages 8.2 points per game, 5.6 rebounds per game, and has an impressive 4.8 blocks per game. She is one of the four co-captains of the Falcons, who are second in the conference with a 13-1 record.

What is all the more remarkable about Kroon’s accomplishments is that she is the only the second athlete ever to compete in the National Collegiate Athletic Association who has had a liver transplant. Kroon was just 16 when she learned that she had auto-immune hepatitis and needed a liver transplant operation. She was playing in her native Alaska’s high school basketball championship tournament when the call came that a liver was available. She underwent a successful operation in 2002.

Coach van Beek, new head coach, admires what Kroon deals with on a day-to-day basis. Kroon takes 11 pills daily to make sure her liver is working properly. “She has to take medication that suppresses the immune system,” said van Beek. “She has to live a life different from most college kids.”

Kroon plans to graduate in June. Her great joy in playing basketball will always be with her as she thinks of pursuing an internship in the Department of Athletics at the University of Anchorage.

She spends a lot of time in the gym, practicing either free-throws or just shooting the ball. All the practices and the pain of getting in shape has paid off for Kroon and her teammates. The team has 107 wins and just 9 losses in the almost 4 years that Kroon and the returning seniors have played together. Kroon’s hopes that this season will have a special ending have come true. Seattle Pacific University went to the Division II Regionals where they won their first two games, including defeating rival Western Washington by 20 points. Kroon led the Falcons with 20 points and 7 rebounds in that game. The Falcons lost to Chico State (C.A.) in the Regional Finals and finished the season with a 24-6 record. Kroon averaged 9 points, grabbed 5 rebounds, and had 119 blocks for the season.

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Camille Paglia: Speaking at the Writing Center

By ALEXANDRA SMYTH

Camille Paglia has an opinion and she's not afraid to share it. She is one of the more controversial writers of our time, according to Lewis Burke Frumkes, director of the Writing Center at Marymount Manhattan College, who introduced her. Paglia is a professor at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and has been voted one of the world’s top twenty intellectual figures. Camille Paglia has also authored several books, including Sexual Personae, Sex, Art, and American Culture, and the recent bestseller, Break, Blow, Burn. Paglia spoke about her experiences as a writer recently at Marymount Manhattan College as a part of the Writing Center’s Best-Selling Authors lecture series.

Paglia made it clear from the beginning of her lecture that she was present to speak about her life as a writer and not as the controversial firebrand as she is sometimes perceived. She began her talk by discussing how she formed her sense of self as a writer. Born into an Italian-American family in Endicott, New York, Paglia developed an appreciation for language at a young age. She was influenced by the rapid and lively conversational style of her Italian relatives. She said, “Language is a matter of the moment—almost choreography.” She found herself drawn to the colorful language of billboards, newspaper headlines, and advertisements, which would go on to influence her later writing.

As she continued with her talk, Paglia discussed how she developed as a writer. She was highly influenced by the colorful language of Lewis Carroll’s Through the Looking Glass, as well as The Epigrams of Oscar Wilde. She said she found herself fascinated by Wilde’s ability to create sharp, memorable one-liners. Soon her ambition as a writer was to concoct a one-liner “so strong and penetrating that it will be memorable.” The influence of advertising continued over from her childhood as well. Paglia spoke about her love for “high-impact, exclamatory sounds,” and her attempts at creating contrast in her writing by mixing slang with higher forms of commentary. First-wave feminism also had a large influence on her work. She recalled when she was given a copy of Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex, and how much it influenced her.

Paglia also discussed her latest book, Break, Blow, Burn, an anthology of what she considers to be forty-three of the world’s greatest poems. Paglia told her audience that Break, Blow, Burn is meant to make poetry accessible to the every day person. It took Paglia several years to compile and narrow down her list of poems to be included in the book. She discussed her criteria, saying, “Poetry that lasts is poetry that understands what it is. It uses words to get beyond words. It is a point of contact between the mind and nature.”

Paglia concluded her lecture by taking questions from the audience. There were many questions about her writing process, which she graciously answered. She had many words of advice for aspiring writers in the audience. Paglia first discussed the importance of understanding language. She expressed distress over reliance on spell-check rather than the use of dictionaries to check the spelling of words. Paglia stressed the use of dictionaries to check the spelling of words as well as studying the etymology and meanings of words. She stated that word study is the basis of much of her work. Her simplest piece of advice for the audience about her writing process was, “First I write sentences, then I write paragraphs.” Makes sense to us!

Another Attack on Principals?

By JILL LEVY

Even before I began to read The New York Times front-page article, “Principals Face Review in Education Overhaul” (April 12) about the new school report cards, it was clear from the headline alone that Joe Klein was following his basic instinct, one he shares with the Queen of Hearts in Alice in Wonderland. The headline might as well have screamed: “Out with their heads!”

Of course, the public is conditioned to salivate over the prospect of a Principal being raked over the coals as well as to believe that the answer to failing schools is simply to change the Principal. One can see how these notions only serve to obscure the underlying issues in some schools and further remove the Mayor and his Chancellor from public scrutiny and blame. It is a clever marketing and public relations scheme.

Coached in the article was my favorite phrase that Klein uses time and time again: a “work in progress.” What does that phrase conjure for the reader or the listener? I envision an artist reworking his canvas over and over while the public eagerly awaits the unveiling. I am fairly certain that “works in progress” are rarely concluded and when they are, they never satisfy the waiting public.

So here we are well into the Mayor’s second term and the buzz around town is that we are again heading for a DOE reorganization. All the buzzwords are out there; Regions, ROCS, LSIs and as always the promise of more autonomy for Principals. Principals savor that word and rightly so. Yet, autonomy in public service is limited by federal, state and local laws as well as local regulations. Budget demands, contracts and funding sources also may minimize autonomy. The roles of other city agencies and guidelines often interfere with the presumed authority and autonomy of Principals. And certainly, let us not forget the dynamics of internal and external politics swirling around Principals and Assistant Principals on a daily basis.

I am anxious to see what the Chancellor has in mind when he promises more authority to Principals in his Autonomy Zone. Will his new contract for Zone Principals pass the sniff test in relation to the current negotiated evaluation process and/or “scores” for Principals’ ratings? I am anxious to see how many Principals will exercise their right to legal counsel before signing any contract...

What the public knows and cares about, however, is that Klein & Co. have a new way to grade schools. In his pitch to the public, the grading system has a direct link to the evaluation of Principals. CSA has yet to see the details of the plan. We have, however, demanded impact-bargaining on the issue of Principal evaluations.

We are in for a colossal change in our thinking and approach to testing and instructional strategies. It appears that after extraordinary efforts by the DOE to control curriculum, strategies and learning materials, this new phase may place those decisions back into the schools. Is this part of the “work in progress”? It seems to me that progress implies “going in the right direction,” another phrase that this administration loves to use. If one is always going in the right direction, does that mean the goal will be attained or does it mean that, like Sisyphus, the goal will always be unattainable? In the world of public relations, painting the picture that every change is simply a new phase of the original reorganization diverts any blame and buys time. After all, change is a process that takes place over time. The only thing we know for sure is that this administration’s “time” is limited. 

Jill Levy is the President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.
CCNY Receives $500k NOAA Grant To Increase Underrepresented Minority Participation In Sciences

The City College of New York (CCNY) has received a $499,314 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to introduce undergraduate students to applied research applications. The grant, one of five awarded by the federal agency for an “Environmental Demonstration Project,” is part of an initiative to develop and enhance education-opportunity at minority-serving institutions.

CCNY will partner with the NOAA Cooperative Remote Sensing Science and Technology Center (NOAA-CREST), which is based at the college, to introduce students to applied research applications and the mechanics of constructing business opportunities at NOAA. Among other things, conduct research consistent with the agency’s missions and to create a framework to recruit and train students from underrepresented minorities for professional opportunities with NOAA and related industries. Dr. Reza Khanbilvardi, NOAA Chair Professor of Civil Engineering, serves as its Director.

“As the home of NOAA-CREST and an institution with a long tradition of providing quality education and opportunity to the underprivileged and underrepresented, City College will benefit enormously from this support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,” said Dr. Khanbilvardi.

“These grants will help students pursue careers, advanced degrees, or environmental entrepreneurship opportunities in the sciences directly related to NOAA’s mission,” said Jacqueline Rousseau, director of NOAA’s Educational Partnership Program (EPP).

The other institutions that received grants were Clark Atlanta University, Savannah State University, the Northwest Indian College in Bellingham, Wash., and Oxnard College in Oxnard, Calif.

The EPP program, in its fourth year, provides funding to cooperate science centers and undergraduate scholarship and graduate science programs to support educational and research opportunities. A new “high school pipeline” project was added this year.

“This educational initiative is a special partnership between NOAA, several academic institutions and the public-private sector aimed at preparing the next generation of students to pursue careers, advanced academic studies, and new opportunities in the NOAA sciences,” said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D, Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator.

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Open Houses
Target/First Saturday Featuring Akrobat Dance Party, Steel Band Music, Phyllis Scan, Music Concert, and Films on May 6 at the Brooklyn Museum
At the Brooklyn Museum’s Target/First Saturday, thousands of visitors enjoy free programs of art and entertainment each month. May’s event celebrates the special exhibition: Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Robinson. Some Target/First Saturday programs have limited space and must be ticketed. Tours for free tickets often fill 30 minutes in advance. Programs are subject to change without notice. Museum galleries are open until 11 pm. Parking is a flat rate of $4 from 8 pm to 11 pm.

May 6 | PROGRAMS
6:15—9 pm: Performance: The Young Hoofers perform innovative improvisational tap dance routines that incorporate hip-hop and challenge ideas.
6:00—8.30 pm: ﬂoating class: CASYM Steel Orchestra performs traditional steel pan music presented as part of the Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concert Series. Free tickets available at the Visitor Center at 3.30 pm.
7.30—9.30 pm: Modern Vitreous: Spoonhead-words postcards from Brooklyn’s Smell Town perform new and original work inspired by the music of Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR) that blends funk, rock, hip-hop and improvisational tap dance routines that incorporate hip-hop and challenge ideas.
8.30 pm: Film: Four Eyed Monsters (Art Curnley and Suana Basa), 2005, 91 min., adult themes, technology, presented by the Brooklyn International Film Festival. Free tickets available at the Visitor Center at 7.30 pm.

TOURO COLLEGE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF CAREER AND APPLIED STUDIES
200 EASTERN PARKWAY BROOKLYN NY 11225-6052
Phone: 718-259-0414, ext 50
Fax: 718-259-0413

TOURO COLLEGE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF CAREER AND APPLIED STUDIES presents Touro Summer 2005, 81 min., adult themes) presented by the Brooklyn International Film Festival, free tickets available at the Visitor Center at 7.30 pm.

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I met Mrs. Françoise Mevel, the head of St. Joseph school located in the center of Bordeaux in France. St Joseph School has 67 children, primarily girls, from 6 to 17 years. Educators, social workers, head, administrator, speech therapist and psychologists work together in this school which is part of the Medico Pedagogical Institution (IMF) that provides services for children who suffer from mental disorders.

Ms. Françoise Mevel, 52, has been the school head for 10 years. Her background includes a study of philosophy, teaching in elementary schools and later becoming a trained educational psychologist, working with very small groups of children who had learning difficulties. She began to work with her husband, a psychiatrist who works with families with very young children later working with psychoanalyst René Kaës, in Lyon for 4 years.

The following is an interview between Myriam Pichon (MP) and Françoise Mevel (FM).

MP: What do you think about our French educational system? Do you think we could improve it?

FM: Yes. I think our elementary system is good, but I think the propositions we offer for the handicapped children are too complex and heads are not well trained. I think the head enables the team to be the best. Another point is it would be efficient to have two more teachers in a team working in a specialized school to help children who need more attention, and extra time to progress.

MP: What do you think about the last violent events in our inner suburbs?

FM: I think today we are in a political system which chooses to use repression and abandon the educational system. Our problem has existed for many years. The immigrants were useful to build back France after WWII, but we did not have the ability to fit them in our society. So now their children are in a very difficult situation in a society that increases the failures that teenagers cannot manage psychologically. Then the French school is not adapted enough to the problems of different cultures. We feel that teenagers’ violence is against schools because they burned many schools. Teenagers hold resentment against a school that does not help them to fit into our society. There is also family responsibility.

MP: About the teachers training, which are the points we could improve?

FM: Teacher training makes engineers of knowledge. The contents are very numerous; they study languages, history, geography, sciences. Maybe that profession that works with human beings needs to think of group management; teachers need to think about their way of teaching. Very often new teachers repeat what their teachers did, they repeat the system they knew when they were students. They need to learn how to meet families.

To conclude we can say today France really needs to do something concrete to give to our children a future. They need to feel we support them. That is not the case at the present time. The very sad events which happened a few months ago, prove to us the feeling of uneasiness of our young people.
Bel Of The Ballroom Still Hip At 95

The author, educator and humorist Bel Kaufman, who turns 95 on May 10, will be honored by the Town Hall on June 12. Her novel “Up the Down Staircase,” which drew heavily on her experiences as a teacher in the New York City public school system, is still in print and has sold over 7 million copies worldwide since its publication in 1963. She taught English at a dozen high schools in Manhattan, where she resided for many years before moving to New Jersey in 1990. Kaufman is the last of her family to have known Sholem Aleichem, granddaughter of the legendary Yiddish novelist who turns 95 on May 10, will be honored by the New York City Department of Education, Schoenfeld’s Shubert Foundation is also involved in bringing “Broadway Junior” to inner city schools. The new Gerald Schoenfeld Board of Directors. The new Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre colleagues for the first time. A magna cum laude graduate of Hunter College and of Columbia University where she earned her master’s degree in English Literature, Ms. Kaufman, who is a magna cum laude graduate of Hunter College and of Columbia University where she earned her master’s degree in English Literature, Ms. Kaufman, who is a magna cum laude graduate of Hunter College and of Columbia University where she earned her master’s degree in English Literature, Ms. Kaufman, who is a magna cum laude graduate of Hunter College and of Columbia University where she earned her master’s degree in English Literature, Ms. Kaufman, who is a magna cum laude graduate of Hunter College and of Columbia University where she earned her master’s degree in English Literature, Ms. Kaufman, who is a magna cum laude graduate of Hunter College and of Columbia University where she earned her master’s degree in English Literature, Ms. Kaufman, who is a magna cum laude graduate of Hunter College and of Columbia University where she earned 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The Metamorphosis of a Writer: An Interview with Gary Shteyngart

By LIZA YOUNG

To read Gary Shteyngart’s work is to experience his politically and socially keen eye, with his satiric wit often generating a laugh out loud response. His rich and evocative descriptions illuminate real life oddities through humor. His rich and evocative descriptions illuminate real life oddities through humor. His satiric wit often generating a laugh out loud response. His rich and evocative descriptions illuminate real life oddities through humor.

Shteyngart travels extensively, fueling ideas for his novels, and his work as a contributing editor to Travel & Leisure and the New Yorker. Recently Shteyngart, returned from Brazil, and shared with educator Liza Young his experiences, humor and insight about the metamorphosis of a writer.

As the first generation in his family to grow up in the United States, or generation 1.5, as he calls it—the kind to navigate back and forth between his own generation and that of his parents and grandparents—Shteyngart has faced challenging times. But he credits his early experiences with the “real world” as a tool for him to be a better writer and storyteller. He recalled the first time he ventured into the new territory of eating a pizza and almost choked trying to “scarf down the cheese in one bite.” His experience at Hebrew Day School was a struggle for him as well. When he began reading his humorous stories for the first time, he found that the “real world” did not provide the experience of the “real world” did not provide the experience of the real world

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Shteyngart immigrated to NY with his fami- Shteyngart immigrated to NY with his family from Leningrad at age seven during the early 70’s. In contrast to today’s global society, the experience of growing up as a Russian Jew in pre-war St. Petersburg, Russia, was almost impossible to crash the party as the guests ready for the ball whether it be the makeovers of his classmates.

Taken all this in stride, he found solace in writing. His first published novel, The Russian Debutante’s Handbook, received vast critical acclaim, including the Stephen Crane Award for First Fiction.

Shynteyngart’s advice to aspiring writers is to choose a career that provides the luxury of being able to come home and write following a day of work which enables him to be the “real you” that the writing group one joins be composed of members who share a similar taste in writing. Getting an agent is critical to a successful writing career—publishing credits as well as completion of an MFA program are instrumental in getting an agent. The bottom line with the MFA program is that it’s a worthwhile investment if one can afford it, but if money is short, the benefits from the program will not outweigh the costs of attending.

Shynteyngart, who has taught at Hunter College and will teach at Columbia University in the fall, has cautionary advice for educators. He regularly reads the National Endowment for the Arts reports and is disturbed by the rapidly continuing decline in literacy rates. He hopes for teachers to present classics, such as The Metamorphosis of a Writer: An Interview with Gary Shteyngart

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Assemblyman Karim Camara Endorses Andrew Cuomo For Attorney General

Attorney General candidate Andrew Cuomo picked up the endorsement of New York Assemblyman Karim Camara (43rd District) of Brooklyn. In announcing his support for Cuomo, Camara pointed to the candidate’s record of addressing issues important to the inner city and his lifelong crusade for social justice.

“People in Brooklyn want their next Attorney General to be someone who understands our communities and their needs,” said Camara. “I know that Andrew will be that Attorney General who makes a real difference on behalf of Brooklyn’s most vulnerable. I know Andrew will do it because he has done so in the past.”

The two men’s careers first intersected when Camara and Cuomo were both doing community-based development work. Camara worked with the American Red Cross of Greater New York in their Emergency Family Center and Cuomo was leading Housing Enterprise for Less Privileged (HELP). HELP, which became the nation’s largest private provider of transitional housing for homeless individuals and families, began its work in the Borough of Brooklyn and Camara worked at HELP I on occasion.

“I began my career with Andrew, working in the HELP I program he pioneered,” continued Camara. “Today, there is so much more to do to continue the social justice crusade we began at HELP. When Andrew is Attorney General, I look forward to working with him as he enforces anti-discrimination laws, prosecutes predatory lenders, and battles the Bush Administration on behalf of the housing and community development funds we need and deserve.”

“It’s with great pride that I accept Assemblyman Camara’s support,” said Cuomo. “Every New Yorker deserves to live in a neighborhood that is safe, affordable, vibrant, and true to the promise of our state. As Attorney General, I’ll fight to ensure everyone in this state gets the opportunity to live and work and raise their families with the dignity they deserve. Assemblyman Camara is my highest respect. He comes from a tradition and philosophy that I admire: using government to make a difference for New Yorkers who need help.”

Assemblyman Camara joins the growing ranks of leading New Yorkers who have endorsed Cuomo’s campaign, including City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, former Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Congressman Edolphus Towns, Assemblyman Darryl Towns, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, Brooklyn Borough Councilwoman Margarita Lopez, Queens County Democratic Chairman Tom Manton, Suffolk County Democratic Chairman Rich Schaffler, and State Senator Tom Duane.

Celebrating Mother’s Day: The Power of 2 Mothers Fighting for Peace

By LIZA YOUNG

John F. Kennedy once said: “There is an old saying that the course of civilization is a race between catastrophe and education. In a democracy such as ours, we must make sure that education wins the race.”

Noni Darwish and Miri Eisen, two women from different sides of the Middle East, are using the power of education to plant the seeds for peaceful relations in the Middle East. Each with three children, they have joined forces, through the The Israel Project—an international, non-profit organization dedicated to informing the public and press about Israel and promoting freedom and peace— to work towards overcoming the harsh reality in their lives. They strive to create a peaceful future for their children and children’s children. Recently a series of conferences were held as part of the “Mothers for Peace” cross-country tour, with Darwish and Eisen speaking out about their mission.

Darwish is the daughter of the leader of the Fedayeen guerrilla operations, Lt. Col. Mustafa Hafaz, an organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Hafaz who took part in the murder of dozens of Israelis, including women and children, was eventually assasinated by the Israeli Defense Forces. Darwish chose not to heed the words of Gamal Nasser—then president of Egypt—calling for revenge, and got past the culture of hatred she was exposed to throughout her childhood, which included songs with the anti-Semitic: “Arabs are our friends and Jews our dogs.”

Through a series of turning points, Darwish came to the realization that the real solution to the Middle East crisis lies in a severe reform of education as well as re-evaluation of Arabs of their religion. One of her early epiphanies was when Israeli officers were searching for her father in her home and left without harming women or children in the household. Another occasion that left a strong imprint was when her brother was left a strong imprint was when her brother was children in the household. Another occasion that came to the realization that the real solution to their religion. One of her early epiphanies was when Israeli officers were searching for her father in her home and left without harming women or children in the household. Another occasion that came to the realization that the real solution to

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• Certificate in Social Emotional and Academic Education with the Center for Social and Emotional Education
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Recently, over 320 teachers and administrators gathered at P.S. 124 for the 5th Annual Curriculum, Community, Collaboration and Celebration Conference presented by Teachers Network, a non-profit organization. The conference consisted of workshops providing fresh approaches to helping students improve their academic performance, particularly in science and literacy. Teachers Network is trying to alleviate the chronic problem affecting secondary schools—lack of certified science teachers—by inviting experienced teachers to share their knowledge and ideas with other educators.

The workshops were a great success as attendees worked together on activities and strategies they would incorporate into their classes. “I’m excited about learning how to apply concepts to the actual classroom,” exclaimed Margaret Avila after attending the workshops, “How to Set Up an Effective Elementary Classroom” and “Teaching Science Across the Elementary Grades.”

The workshops also provided many networking opportunities. “I appreciated the open discussion format of the workshops and it was really helpful to hear from other teachers,” said Doris Mackey. An increasingly popular topic among teachers is how to incorporate more technology into the curriculum. Educators are interested in learning how to harness the power of the Internet and integrate it into the classroom. According to Communications and Development Associate, Whitney English, two of the most popular workshops were “Technology Tools to Promote Scientific Thinking” in which science teacher Conrad Fernandez of the Mott Hall School discussed strategies for using computer probes in the secondary classroom and the “21st Century Classroom” where teachers learned how to enhance their lessons with technological tools such as the Internet. Even workshops that did not directly address technology included websites for teachers to log onto for additional information.

As more students rely on digital resources to complete their assignments, it is important that teachers become “tech-savvy” as well. Supporting the needs of teachers has always been the purpose of Teachers Network. “There is a huge demand right now for Internet training, but we’re ready for the onslaught,” stated Teachers Network President and CEO, Ellen Dempsey. Dempsey pointed out that Teachers Network built its website ten years ago, long before it was common for companies to have websites. As Deputy Chancellor Carmen Farina observed during her closing remarks, “Teachers Network has always been at the forefront of what teachers need to succeed.” Just as today’s conference empowered teachers to find new ways to improve student learning, Dempsey confirmed that Teachers Network will continue to address the challenges teachers face through workshops and other resources.

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